

# INTRODUCTION TO GAELIC

FOR BEGINNERS

BY ONE WHO HAS ACQUIRED  
THE LANGUAGE

PART I.

H.M. 320(5)



LAURISTON CASTLE  
LIBRARY ACCESSION

## PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING.

“Caol ri caol ’s leathan ri leathan.” “A broad to a broad and a narrow to a narrow.” This refers to the Gaelic vowels, and fixes the spelling of the words and the pronunciation of the consonants.

Gaelic vowels are divided into two classes:—the broad vowels, a, o, and u, and the narrow vowels, e and i; and the rule means that a consonant must be flanked by vowels of the same class. That is to say, if preceded by a narrow vowel they must be followed by a narrow vowel, and if preceded by a broad vowel they must be followed by a broad vowel. As the language is largely made up of prefixes and suffixes this rule must be carefully adhered to, and narrow or broad vowels added, as the case may be, before affixing the necessary termination. All feminine nouns form their plural by adding *an* to the sing. Take the noun “*sith*” (shēē), a fairy, and adding *an* for the plural would give *sithan*. This would form a breach of the rule, as the *th* is preceded by the narrow vowel *i*, and followed by the broad vowel *a*. To keep to the rule it is necessary to add an *e* before the suffix, the correct spelling being *sithean* (shēēūn). Again all regular verbs form their future by adding *idh* to the root. Take the verb *tog*, lift, add *idh* to form the future tense, and you get *togidh*, which is another breach of the rule, as the consonant *g* is preceded by the broad vowel *a*, and followed by the narrow vowel *i*, and an *a* must be added to keep to the rule, and the correct spelling of the word is *togaidh*.

*Aspiration.*

Aspiration consists in placing an *h* after a consonant. This is sometimes necessary for grammatical purposes, and sometimes for euphony.

The following consonants are aspirable, viz. :—*b, c, d, f, g, m, p, t, and s*, when followed by *l, n, r*, or a vowel.

The following are inaspirable, viz. :—*l, n, r, sg, sm, st, and sp*.

*Pronunciation.*

a short as a in hat	.	.	.	a
a long as a in tar	.	.	.	â
a short as u in gun	.	.	.	u
e long as a in nay	.	.	.	a
e short as e in met	.	.	.	ê
i short as i in piano	.	.	.	ee
i long as ee in peeled	.	.	.	ēē
o short as o in pot	.	.	.	o
o long as o in born	.	.	.	ô
o short as o in cold	.	.	.	ō
u short as u in put	.	.	.	öö
u long as u in pull	.	.	.	ōō
a short as u in gun	.	.	.	u

The sound of the French *eu* in *Jeune* is shown by *êû*

*Consonant Sounds.*

*B*, midway between a *b*, and a *p*.

*Bh*, like a *v*.

*C*, always hard like *k*.

*Ch*, guttural, like *ch* in *Auchtermuchty*.

*D* (*a*) before a narrow vowel, like *j* in *Jerusalem*.

(*b*) before a broad vowel, midway between a *d* and a *t*.

*Dh*, like *ghy*.

*F, L, M, P, R, and N*, as in English, but softer.

Fh, always mute.

G, always like a k.

Gh, like ch, but more guttural.

Mh, like v.

Ph, like f.

S (*a*) before a narrow vowel, like sh.

(*b*) before a broad vowel, like ss.

Sh, like simple h, as in has.

T (*a*) before a narrow vowel, as ch in cherry.

(*b*) before a broad vowel, as in English, but softer.

Th, like English, h in has.

## LESSON I.

### VERB BI (BEE), BE THOU.

This is a most important verb, as it is so often used in the language. It enters into so many combinations, forming as it does the present tense as well as the compound tenses of all the verbs, and in conjunction with the preposition, Aig means possession, or to have. The pupil must consequently get a thorough grasp of it in all its forms, all of which are here given in detail. This is the only verb which has a present tense. In all other verbs the present tense is compounded of the verb Bi and the present participle.

The verb has four tenses, viz.:—Present, Past, Subjunctive, and Future. There is also the Imperative Mood.

Each tense has two forms, viz.:—Dependent and Independent, and the Future has a third, which we may call the relative, as it only is used after the relative pronoun in the partitive Ma.

The Independent is only used for the affirmative expression, as—"they are," "the men were," etc., while the de-

pendent form is used for all other forms, viz.:—Negative, Interrogative, Conditional, etc.

The Dependent form depends for its meaning on the partitive which is prefixed. A partitive is thus a sign placed before the dependent to fix its meaning. The partitive has no translation in itself, but it fixes the true meaning of the verb, thus the interrogative partitive “*An*” prefixed makes it interrogative, and the negative partitive “*Cha*” makes the same verb negative. (See Partitives, page 00.)

The verb always precedes the noun, and is not declined for person or number; thus, having got the form, every number and person is obtained, as:—

Tha mi (hâ mee), I am.	Tha sinn (ha sheeñ), We are.
Tha thu (hâ oo), Thou art.	Tha sibh (ha sheev), You are.
Tha e (hâ e), He is.	Tha iad (ha ād), They are.

#### PRESENT TENSE.

Ind. Tha (hâ).

Dep. Beil (bpāl).

Tha mi (hâ mee), I am.

Am bheil mi (um vāl mee), Am I?

Cha 'n eil mi (chan yāl mee), I am not.

Nach 'eil mi (nach āl me), Am I not?

Ma tha mi (mu hâ mee), If I am.

Mur 'eil mi (mur āl mee), If I am not.

Ged a tha mi (ket u thâ mee), Though I am.

Ged nach 'eil mi (ket nach āl mee), Though I am not.

Gu bheil mi (ku vāl mee), That I am.

Nach eil mi (nach āl me), That I am not.

It will be noticed that Nach occurs twice with different meanings, but no ambiguity should occur, as, when it is the interrogative partitive, it comes at the beginning of a sentence or clause, and when the relative negative it is in the middle and follows its antecedent.

## EXERCISE.

*Vocabulary.*

An la	(un llâ)	The day.
Am fear	(um fêr)	The man.
An gille	(un keelye)	The boy.
Do'n bhaile	(ton val)	To yhe town.
An-t each	(un tchyach)	The horse.
Fuar	(fooar)	Cold.
Fluich	(floodh)	Wet.
Og	(ôgk)	Young.
Deas	(jess)	Ready.
Laidir	(lâjer)	Strong.
Dachaidh	(tachy)	Home.
A' dol	(u tol)	Going.
Fathast	(fâhust)	Yet.
Blath	(bplâh)	Warm.
Sgith	(skee)	Tired.
Crubach	(kroobuch)	Lame.
Ard	(ardt)	High.
Luath	(looa)	Swift.
Mall	(maull)	Slow.
An so	(un sho)	Here.
An sin	(un sheen)	There.
An sud	(un shoot)	Yonder.
An diugh	(un joo)	To-day.
A nis	(u neesh)	Now.
A' tighinn	(u chēēng)	Coming.
Ach	(uch)	But.

## GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Tha an la fuar. Cha'n eil an la fuar, tha e blath. Ged a tha e blath tha e fluich. Nach' eil iad an sin a nis? Cha'n eil, tha iad an so an nis. Mur eil am fear fuar tha e fluich. Tha an gille an so an diugh. Tha an gille

sgith, ach cha'n eil e fuar. Tha e ag radh gu bheil e og, ach tha mi ag radh nach eil e. Am bheil thu 'dol dachaidh a nis? Cha'n eil, tha mi a 'dol do'n bhaile. Am bheil iad a 'dol do'n bhaile? Tha. Tha an gille ard ach cha'n eil e laidir. Tha i a' tighinn dachaidh a nis. Nach eil an la blath? Tha.

## ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

He is not here yet. Are you not ready yet? No, he is ready but I am not. The horse is lame. They are not here yet. The boy is tall though he is young. If the man is not wet he is cold. The day is warm. The horse is swift but the dog is slow. Is he not coming home? No, he is going to the town. If you are not coming they are. Though the boy is young he is strong. The boy is cold and wet. If the man is not here the boy is. Though the boy is not strong he is young. If the horse is not tired it is lame. He says (is saying) that he is coming here, but they say (are saying) that he is not. If you are not going they are.

## LESSON SECOND.

### PAST TENSE.

Ind. Bha (vâ), was, wert, or were.

Dep. Robh (rov), ,, ,,

Bha mi (vâ mee), I was.

An robh mi (un rov mee), Was I?

Cha robh mi (cha rov mee), I was not.

Nach robh mi? (nach rov mee), Was I not?

Ma bha mi (mu vâ mee), If I was.

Na'n robh mi (nun rov mee), If I was.

Mur an robh mi (mur an rov mee), If I was not.

Ged a bha mi (ket u vâ me), Though I was.



Ged nach robh mi (ket nach rov mee), Though I was not.  
 Gu'n robh mi (kun rov mee), That I was.  
 Nach robh mi (nach rov me), That I was not.

## EXERCISES.

*Vocabulary.*

Na coin	(nu kooín)	The dogs.
Na cailleagan	(nu kallegun)	The girls.
Na fir	(nu feer)	The men.
Na gilleán	(nu keelyun)	The boys.
An sionnach	(un sheenuch)	The fox.
An achadh	(un achy)	The field.
An sgian	(un skeeun)	The knife.
Na clachan	(nu kluchun)	The stones.
An-t ord	(unt owrd)	The hammer.
A'chraobh	(u chrūv)	The tree.
Leisg	(lāishgk)	Lazy.
Seolta	(sholta)	Cunning.
Mor	(mōr)	Great.
Cailte	(kāiltche)	Lost.
Cruaidh	(krooay)	Hard.
Trom	(trowm)	Heavy.
'Nuair	(nooair)	When?
An de	(un jāy)	Yesterday.
An raoir	(un rāre)	Last night.
Riamh	(reeūv)	Ever.

## GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Bha na coin luath ach bha iad leisg. Cha robh na fir an so an de ach bha iad an so an raoir. 'Nuair a bha e an so an raoir bha ma sgith. Tha na gilleán an so an diugh ach cha robh iad an so an de. Nach robh e sgith? Cha robh, ach bha e fluich. Mur 'eil na fir an sud an diugh bha iad an de. C'aite an robh sibh an raoir? Bha mi a'

dol dachaidh. Tha mi a' tighinn a nis. Nach robh sibh riamh an sud? Cha robh. Am bheil a' chraobh ard? Tha. An robh a' chlach trom? Bha.

### ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

The girls were here yesterday. The men were ready but the boys were not. Though the man was tall he was not strong. The fox was cunning. The field is not large. He said that the knife was lost but it was not. If the men were not yonder last night the boys were. He said that they were going home, but she said that they were coming here. The hammer was heavy. Were the dogs swift? Yes.

### *Subjunctive.*

Indep. Bitheadh or bhiodh (vee-ugh), Would be.

Dep. Bidheadh or biodh (bee-ugh).

The Subjunctive is the only tense in which any change takes place throughout the tense, and this change occurs in the first person both singular and plural, in which case the pronouns have become amalgamated with the verb. The independent forms of the whole tense is given to show this, and in the dependent forms the proper termination is given, and the pupil must be careful to note the change for the first person singular and plural.

### Singular.

1. Bhithinn or Bhiom (vee-ing or veeum), I would.
2. Bhitheadh thu (vee-ugh oo), Thou wouldst be.
3. „ „ ( „ a), He would be.

### Plural.

1. Bhitheamaid or Bhiomaid (veeumatj), We would be.
2. Bhidheadh sibh (vee-ugh sheev), You would be.
3. „ „ ( „ „ ), They would be.

Am bitheadh e (um beeugh a), Would he be.  
 Cha bhidhedh e (cha , , ), He would not be.  
 Nach bitheadh e (nach beeugh e), Would he not be.  
 Na'm bitheadh e (num beeugh e), If he would be.  
 Mur bitheadh e (mur beeugh a), If he would not be.  
 Ged a bhitheadh e (ket a veeugh e), Though he would be.  
 Gu'm bitheadh e (kum beeugh a), That he would be.  
 Nach bitheadh e (nach beeugh a), That he would not be.

### EXERCISES.

#### GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Na'm bitheadh e deas bhithinn. Bhidhinn an sin na'm bitheadh thu. Bhitheadh an uinneag briste. Nach bitheadh e deas. Cha bitheadh. Bhitheadh an tigh togta nam bitheadh iad dichìoll.

#### ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

The men would be ready if the boys would be. Though the dog would be strong it would be tired. I would be ready if you would be. It would be cold. Though the men would be late we would not be. The day would not be warm, it would be cold. Would the horse not be tired? He said he would be late.

### LESSON III.

#### FUTURE TENSE.

Ind. Bithidh (peehee).

Dep. Bi (pee).

Rel. Bhitheas (veehus).

Bithidh mi (peehee me), I will be.

Am bi mi (um pee mee), Will I be.

Cha bhi mi (cha vee mee), I will not be.

Nach bi mi (nach pee me), Will I not be.

Ma bhitheas mi (mu veehus me), If I will be.

Mur bi mi (mur pee me), If I will not be.  
 Ged a bhitheas mi (ket u veehus mee), Though I will be.  
 Ged nach bi mi (ket nach pee me), Though I will not be.  
 Gu'm bi mi (koom bee mee), That I will be.  
 Nach bi mi (nach pee mee), That I will not be.

## EXERCISES.

*Vocabulary.*

An tuathanach	(un tooanuch)	The farmer.
An ciopair	(un keepur)	The shepherd.
Na-h eich so	(nuhaych sho)	These horses.
Na-h eoin sin	(nu hyon sheen)	These birds.
Margadh	(maruguch)	Market.
Am feasgar	(um feshgur)	The afternoon.
Am bata	(um bpāta)	The boat.
Dorcha	(dtoruchu)	Dark.
Air ball	(ar bpall)	Immediately.
Eisg	(āshgk)	Fishes.
Falbh	(faluv)	Away.
Oidhche	(oiche)	Night.
Anmoch	(unumoch)	Late.
So (sho), This or these (placed after the noun).		
Sin (sheen), That or those	„	„
Ud (oodt), Yon	„	„
Am maireach (um mayruch), To-morrow.		
An earrar (un yerrur), The day after to-morrow.		
Leis (lāysh), With him. Anns (anns), In.		
Aig (ak), At. Gle (kle), Very (aspirates the adj.)		

## GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Bithidh an tuanach sin an sin am maireach. Ach cha bhi an ciobair. Ma bhitheas e an sin am maireach cha bhi mi. Mur bi sibh deas air ball bithidh sinn an-moch. Am bi na-h eich anns a' choille ud? Cha bhi, bithidh

iad anns an achadh so. Bithidh na gilleann sin anns an sgoil an diugh, ma bhitheas na cailleagan sin. Cha bhi mi aig a' mhargadh am maireach mur bi sibh. Tha e ag radh gu'm bi e an so an nochd, am bi sibh? Cha bhi, tha mi a' dol do'n bhaile.

### ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

If these men are not here to-night, they will be here to-morrow. These boys will not be in school to-day, but yon girls will. If the men will be ready the boys will. Will you not be quiet? There will be fish in the net. If there will be I will be very pleased. The night will not be very dark. The day will be very warm. If the afternoon will be wet, we will not be in the town. Will the shepherd be in the wood to-morrow? No. He says he will not be ready to-morrow, but that he will be the day after.

### LESSON IV.

#### IMPERATIVE MOOD.

##### *Singular.*

Q. 1 Per.	Bitheam	(beehum)	Let me be.
2 „	Bi	(bee)	Be thou.
3 „	Bitheadh e	(bee-uch)	Let him be.

##### *Plural.*

Bitheamaid	(bee-umaitch)	Let us be.
Bithibh	(beeheev)	Be ye.
Bitheadh iad	(bee-uch ad)	Let them be.

To make these negative prefix *Na*.

It will be noticed that no pronoun is needed in any person except in the third person both singular and plural. In the second singular the pronoun may be used in its emphatic form, *Thusa* for emphasis.



*Vocabulary.*

Eagal	(ekul)	Fear.
Na saighdearan	(nu saiyyurun)	The soldiers.
An uinneag	(un oonyack)	The window.
An dorus	(un torus)	The door.
Samhach	(sâvuch)	Quiet.
Lag-chridheach	(lakchreeuch)	Fainthearted.
Fosgailte	(fosskultche)	Opened.
Cuideachd	(koodjachd)	Also.
An-t slat	(un tlat)	The rod.
Seasmhach	(shessvuch)	Steadfast.
Treun	(treun)	Brave.
Duinte	(dōōntche)	Closed.
Briste	(breeshtchu)	Broken.

## EXERCISES.

## GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Bi samhach. Na bitheadh eagal ort ach bi seasmhach. Na bitheamaid lag - chridheach. Bitheamaid treun. Bitheadh na saighdearan deas. Bitheadh an uinneag fosgailte. Bi falbh. Bitheadh iad briste. Bithibh deas cuideachd.

## ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

Let the door be shut. Let us be firm. Don't be treacherous. Be not afraid. (Let not fear be on you). Let them also be ready. Be brave. Don't let the rod be broken.

## GENERAL EXERCISES ON THE VERB BI.

*Vocabulary.*

'San lathair	(sun lachur)	Present.
Boin	(boin)	Cows.
Air a'mhonadh	(air u vona)	On the Hill.

Anns a' bhata	(anns uatva)	In the boat.
Anns an fhang	(anns u ank)	In the pen.
'Nuair a	(nooar u)	When. (The hour that).
C'uinne a	(koonu)	When. (What the time that?)
Feidh	(faych)	Deers.
Na caorach	(nu kuruch)	The sheep.
Caillte	(kayltche)	Lost.

When I was there yesterday the boy was not present, but he will be here to-night or to-morrow. The farmer was in the town when I was there. These cows are in the corn again to-day, they were there yesterday also; don't let them be there again to-morrow. That girl is not here now, she is gone. Is the window not broken? No. The dog is not in this field, it is in yon wood. There are deer on the hill. Were the men not here last night? No, they were in the boat. Though you will not be ready I will be. Be steadfast and let us not be afraid. Let not fear be on you. The deer were not in the wood, they were on the hill. These boys were not in the boat, when we were there they were on the beach. If the sheep were not in the pen they would be in the field. When the shepherd was on the hill the dogs were hunting. The dogs were swift, but the fox was very cunning. Don't let that stick be lost. Let the window be opened. When the shepherd was there the farmer was in the town, but if he will be at the market again to-morrow, the farmer will be there also.

VERB "HAVE." (*bi* with the preposition *aig*).

There is no equivalent in Gaelic to the verb "have." When it indicates possession it must be translated by the verb *bi* with the preposition *aig* (to) thus—"I have a book" becomes in the Gaelic *ilìom* "a book is to me," and similarly in all its forms. This is the same form as the Latin *Liber est mihi*—A book is to me; I have a book.

*Examples.*

Has the boy not a knife? (Is a knife not to the boy?)  
*Nach 'eil sgian aig 'a ghille.* The girl has not two books.  
 (Two books are not to the girl). *Cha'n 'eil da leabhar*  
*aig a' chailleig.* Though he had not the money yesterday  
 he will have it to-morrow. (Though the money was not  
 to him yesterday it will be to him to-morrow). *Ged nach*  
*robh an-t airgid aig an de, bithidh i aig am maireach.*

The verb know is in Gaelic to have knowledge  
 (knowledge is to) *tha fios aig.* Ex. Do you know if he  
 has a boat? (Is knowledge to you if a boat is to him).  
*Am bheil fios agaibh ma tha bata aig?* No, I do not know.  
*Cha'n eil, cha'n eil fios agam.*

If he did not know where the boat was how did he know  
 that you had it? (If knowledge was not to him where the  
 boat was how was knowledge to him that it was to you?)  
*Mur an robh fios aig, far an robh am bata, cia mar a bha*  
*fios aig gu'n robh e agaibh?*

## EXERCISE.

*Vocabulary.*

Aig an iasgair (āk un eeuskur) to the fisherman.

Agam (akum) to me.

Aig (āk) to him.

Da (tâ) two (takes noun in the sing.)

Co aig am bheil? (kō āk um vāl) (who to whom is) who has.

Co aig an robh (kō āk un rōv) who had.

An-t airgid (un tarigaid) the money.

Aig a' chailleig (āk u challig) to the girl.

Cu (kōo) a dog.

Agaibh (aktiv) to you.

Caora (keûra) a sheep.

Thoilichte (holichtche) pleased.

Eile (eûle) other (placed after the noun).

Fichead (fēēchūt) twenty (takes the noun in the singular).

Coig (kōoik) five

Tasdain (tastin) shillings.



Thogadh (hòkùch) would build. Tigh (teuy) a house.  
 Sam bith (sum bee) any (placed after the noun).  
 An trath so (un trâ shô) just now.  
 Gu cinnteach (koš kēēntchěech) certainly.  
 An uiridh (un ōōry) last year.

#### GAELIC INTO ENGLISH.

Am bheil bata aig an iasgair? Tha da bhata aig. Tha da each aig an tuathanach. Co aig am bheil an sporran? Tha i aig Ian. Co aig an robh am bata? Bha e aig an iasgair. Bha am bata aig Donhuill ach cha'n eil e aig a nis. Ma bhitheas an-t airgiod aig a' chailleig bithidh an tigh aig a' ghillie. Tha da chu aig a' chiobair. Nach eil leabhar agaibh? Cha'n eil. Am bheil Gaillig agaibh? Tha. Bithidh sgian aig a' ghille. Bha fichead caora aig an tuathanach. Bha bata aig Ian an de ach cha'n eil e aig an diugh. Na'n robh sgian aig a' ghille bithidh e gle thoilichte. Cha robh fios agam gu'n robh sibh an sin. Mur eil fios aig an tuathanach gu'n robh an gille an sin bithidh fios aig a nis.

#### ENGLISH INTO GAELIC.

I have not a book. Have you not? He had a horse yesterday. The fisherman has a boat, but he will have another to-morrow. He had not five shillings. The boy has not the knife. If the boy had not the knife, who had it? The girl had it. If the farmer had the money he would build a house. If you have not the horse just now, will you have it to-morrow? Yes, certainly. Do you know if the man has a boat? I do not know if he has a boat just now, but I know he had one last year.

*Bi* with preposition *air* (on).

When the verb *have* is used to express any quality of the mind or body, the verb *Bi* with the preposition *air* on is used, it is thus said to be on the individual.

Ex. He has the fever. (The fever is on him),

Tha am fiabhras air.

He is afraid. (Fear is on him), The eagal air.

He is hungry. (Hunger is on him),

Tha an -t acras air.

The man was astonished. (Astonishment was on the man), Bha iongantais air an duine.

Be not afraid, oh little flock. (Let no fear be on thee, oh little flock), Na biodh eagal ort a threud bhig.

#### GENERAL EXERCISE.

##### *Vocabulary.*

Adharcan	(âyarkun)	horns.
Deich	(jäch)	ten.
Cluas	(klōōs)	ear.
Gu thrath	(koōhrâ)	soon.
An d'fhuaire	(un dōōer)	did get.
Breac	(prêchk)	a trout.
Sporran, a purse.		
Slat, a rod.		
Oglach	(ôkluch)	a servant.
Air na-h eildean	(âr nu hâldjën)	on the hinds.
Punnd	(poönt)	pounds.
Arbhar	(arrar)	corn.
Cearna	(kyârnu)	district.
Fhuair	(ōōer)	got.
Uaireadaire	(ōōrüdäry)	watch.
Crubach	(zkröobüch)	lame.
Lion, a net.		



